

task in identifying where to focus their improvement efforts. The study team developed a prioritization procedure to define the most promising process improvement potentials.

6 Conclusion

Peer review has been a time-tested technique within the scientific community to provide valuable inputs to leading edge developments. Scientists and researchers recognize that comments from a peer review serve to validate the protocols of their efforts and ultimately improve the credibility of the findings. In the context of LCA, peer review or "critical review" does improve quality and transparency of an LCA study as highlighted in the aluminum beverage can example.

7 References

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JLCA Corner: Activities of the Life-Cycle Assessment Society of Japan (JLCA)

Mamoru Morimoto

Manager, Research and Planning Division, JEMAI, Hirokohji NDK Bldg., Ueno 1-17-6, Taitoh-ku, Tokyo, Japan 110;
e-mail: f7370651@ca.aif

On the occasion of the JLCA Meeting held on June 19 and 20, the LCA National Project has been planned which will start in April 1998. It is financially supported by MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industry). The Project will consist of members from industry, university and research institutes. They cooperate for five years. Main subject areas are: Development of an Inventory Data Base; LCA Case Studies; LCA Application Guidelines; LCA Education and Propagation; Inventory Analysis Methodology; Impact Assessment Methodology

JLCA Policy Statement on LCA

The Life Cycle Assessment Society of Japan (JLCA), established in October 1995 with about 250 participating organizations from industries, government and academic sectors, has worked actively for the past 18 months through its three expert committees and eight working groups.

After studying LCA methodologies and their applications, and the requirements and direction for the public inventory data base in Japan, the Forum put together the results into an LCA Forum Report, a proposal for promoting LCA, and a Policy Statement on LCA.

1. In corporation with other parties concerned in the society, industries should incorporate LCA into various business activities such as planning and designing a product, and setting priorities for improving production processes, wherever possible.

2. Amid the ever growing interest in global environmental issues, the concept of "a sustainable development" has now been upheld as one of the most important issues to be addressed and it will be mandatory to incorporate this concept into every social activity. In order to give LCA a due social standing a series of the measures to achieve "a sustainable development" in a broader framework, it is indispensable to develop an efficient LCA method and to construct a data base. Also required is the process of a series of practical application and review of this LCA method which will be efficient enough and consequently attain public recognition as a fair and credible environmental assessment tool.

3. A popular practice of LCA would not be realized without the construction of various data bases and a simple system for their application. Here, the provision of reliable data bases by industries and the disclosure of LCA results are necessary. To facilitate this, the establishment of a national data base agency and a permanent LCA organization upgrading the present JLCA is required.

4. The basic concept of LCA has already been established, although its methods are still in the process of development and an evaluation of impact assessment is yet to be formulated. Results of LCA which we use at present are strongly influenced by the kinds of preconditions laid down and the nature of the data employed. For this reason, in case of using LCA for such purposes as comparing environmental impacts of material and its substitution, utmost care is necessary to avoid any undue distortion of the facts. Moreover, an order of priority to be set on environmental elements and issues to be addressed changes in accordance with the kind of society, place and time. It is therefore necessary to be aware that using the LCA method alone for making a judgement on any complicated issues entails a danger to misjudge.

5. In addressing the global environmental issue in future, it will be undoubtedly required that, in addition to the introduction of LCA methods by the industries concerned, all walks of people – not only industrialists, but also ordinary citizens, accept a life-cycle manner of thinking and review their own life style accordingly. Also indispensable is to promote an enlightening of people on the knowledge of LCA so that they may be able to take action. For this end, all of the administrative authorities should act in concert friendly to the ecology, and to implement appropriate measures.